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TAGS: [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [AF](#) [TU](#) [NATO](#)

SUBJECT: TURKEY SEEKS TO CONTRIBUTE ROBUSTLY TO AFGHANISTAN  
FOLLOWING ISAF VII

Classified By: Counselor for Political-Military Affairs Timothy A. Bett  
s for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

1. (C) PolMilCouns and PolMilOff met with MFA officials June 14 and 15 to follow up on PM Erdogan's comments in the U.S. the week of June 5 that Turkey wants to do more to ensure the stability of Afghanistan after it relinquishes command of ISAF VII in August. Both MFA Deputy Director General for Security Policy Fatih Ceylan (June 14) and MFA DDG for South Asia Aydin Evirgen (June 15) confirmed that Erdogan misspoke when he said Turkey wanted to lead a PRT in Kabul. They clarified that Turkey seeks to take command of ISAF's Kabul Multinational Brigade (Central Region) when this command comes into being (the Turks believe it will be next year).

2. (C) Evirgen explicitly asked for strong U.S. support within the Alliance for Turkey to be appointed to this command. He emphasized that after two failed and difficult attempts to get Ankara to take a PRT, the GOT may not again be in a position to offer significant military assets to Afghanistan stability efforts in the future. (NOTE: Evirgen was a strong advocate in the Turkish bureaucracy in favor of taking a PRT. END NOTE.)

3. (C) PolMilCouns noted that our informal communication with Brussels and Washington indicated that the French have also expressed an interest in taking command of the ISAF central region. He added that we understand that there may be a discrepancy over whether this command will come into being in Phase III or Phase IV of ISAF. Evirgen replied that he understood these issues, and reiterated the GOT's request for U.S. support and also clarification on what our thinking was on the timing issue.

4. (C) Evirgen noted that PM Erdogan's recent trip to Afghanistan was the main catalyst in the GOT's desire to continue its support for Afghanistan. Erdogan was deeply moved by the plight of the Afghan poor, and ordered that Turkey's aid for Afghanistan be increased ten-fold, to U.S. \$100 million. Evirgen believes that he now has the full backing of the GOT in his efforts to promote a prominent Turkish role in assuring the future of Afghanistan. He worried, however, that if a decision on the central region was not taken by NATO soon, enthusiasm for a robust, continuing Turkish contribution could wane, particularly within the Turkish military.

5. (C) Comment: Turkey's desire to maintain a robust force in ISAF is laudable, and the MNB Brigade command may be the way to accomplish just that. Evirgen's warning that if this initiative fails Turkey may be inclined to walk away from Afghanistan stability efforts was not a threat: It was a well-intentioned statement of fact. To prevent this, we will need a coherent, unified USG position regarding the Turkish offer. End comment.

EDELMAN